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9 June 1966

DDI BRIEFING NOTES**THE SITUATION IN CUBA AND THE SOVIET PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND**

I. Fidel Castro's recent fulminations appear to result from deepening personal frustrations over the regime's continuing inability to surmount basic economic and administrative problems.

A. The administrative purge of a number of medium-level officials in the ministries of foreign affairs, foreign trade, and CUBANA airlines was designed to restore dynamism to Castro's regime and to revive revolutionary enthusiasm. It may have had the opposite effect, however.

1. The March 7 to March 11 trial of Major Rolando Cubela, sentenced for plotting to assassinate Castro, probably had the same goal, as well as the aim of deterring other would-be plotters.
2. Armed Forces Vice Minister Ameijeiras was dismissed on March 17. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] he had long been in disfavor with the regime. Several top military commands have been routinely reshuffled since the first of the year; the principals involved were not

DIA review(s)
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cashiered and retain their prominence as political bureau members of Castro's Communist Party.

B. In his speech on March 13 at Havana University, Castro hurled new insults at Peking and charged that the Chinese leaders, in their old age, have confused Marxism-Leninism with fascism. The attack was essentially a reiteration of Castro's earlier statements and came exactly one year after his first criticism of China.

1. For the first time Castro has denounced President Eduardo Frei of Chile and his Christian Democratic Party.

- a. He said that in Chile "the only way to win the revolutionary struggle will be by armed struggle," and he denounced Frei as a coward, a liar, and a reactionary. Havana radio has begun beaming a special propaganda program to Chile attacking Frei and his government.
- b. In early May, Castro renewed old charges of "softness" against President Tito and the "so-called League of Yugoslav Communists."
- c. These attacks reflect the same militancy Cuba displayed at the January Tri-Continent Conference and indicate that Castro is

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losing interest in coexistence and compromise in the hemisphere.

C. The state of alert declared throughout Cuba on May 27 was ostensibly a Cuban reaction to US moves, the most outstanding of which was the killing of a Cuban soldier by a sentry at the Guantanamo Naval Base on May 21. That Castro believed the US was planning to attack is questionable, but there is little doubt he was concerned over recent Cuban exile threats and alleged assassination operations. However, Castro probably artificially escalated the crisis to divert public attention from pressing economic difficulties.

1. The soldier was shot and killed by the US sentry after penetrating the Guantanamo base perimeter during a reconnaissance of a newly laid minefield. At least three other penetrations of the base perimeter occurred between May 21 and May 31--at the direction of the Cuban Government. Additional incidents are possible and would provide the Castro regime with further "justification" to demand greater sacrifices of the people.
2. The alert also probably was intended to test the efficiency of the Cuban defensive system,

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provide realistic training for armed forces personnel, flush out "counterrevolutionaries" unfortunate enough to misjudge the reasons for the alert, and make the USSR reaffirm its support for the Castro regime.

II. Despite Castro's deepening frustrations, his position in Cuba remains pre-eminent.

A. The large and efficient military and security forces under Raul Castro are strong and loyal to the regime. We think they are more than adequate as a defense against insurrection or invasion--barring substantial US assistance.

B. The 55,000 members of the Cuban Communist Party are drawn from an elite core of Castro's most militant supporters. They form the regime's inner bureaucracy.

1. Last October Castro announced the formation of a political bureau, a secretariat, and five standing committees within a 100-man central committee.

2. The party controls provincial and local affairs, education and indoctrination, and the mass organizations.

3. About one fifth of the party members and two thirds of the central committee members are from the Cuban armed forces.

C. Factionalism in the regime appears to be at its lowest level since Castro came to power.

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1. Nearly the entire top civilian and military leadership is included in the central committee.

a. About 20 prominent "old" Communists have gained added stature through membership.

b. There are no adherents of the economics policies of Che Guevara on the central committee.

D. Despite these factors contributing to the regime's stability, there is no doubt that the over-all political climate in Cuba has shifted somewhat in the past year. An air of uncertainty is prevalent in Havana which--if not checked--could lead to further disenchantment.

III. Castro recognizes that he has no alternative to continued large-scale aid from the Soviet Union. As a result, he has continued to move closer to Moscow, and has cooled toward the Chinese.

A. The October 1965 visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to Cuba and Raul Castro's six-week visit to the USSR and Eastern Europe in October and November were probably generally aimed at reviewing Soviet-Cuban relations.

B. Castro probably no longer views all of Latin America as on the brink of revolution. He now limits clandestine Cuban support and concentrates it where revolutionaries are most active. Nevertheless, Cuban propaganda on behalf of armed revolution since the



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January Tri-Continent Conference has reached a level of intensity not seen since 1963.

1. Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia, are Castro's three principal targets.
2. In addition, Cuba has sent military personnel to help insurgents in the Congo, and to train other African revolutionaries in Brazzaville.

IV. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the former minister of industries, and the regime's foremost revolutionary, left the Cuban political scene in the spring of 1965. He may also have left Cuba.

A. Guevara may be carrying out the pledge attributed to him by Castro to assist other revolutionary movements.

B. Guevara's eclipse stemmed from differences with Castro over basic questions relating to the development of the Cuban economy, and to the attitude Cuba should take toward revolutionary activity elsewhere in the hemisphere.

V. Cuba's economic performance remains spotty, and the long-range outlook is uncertain.

A. The 1965 sugar harvest of about 6 million tons surpassed the yearly harvest of the pre-Castro years.

1. This demonstrated the effectiveness of wide economic and administrative reforms applied during 1965.

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- B. The 1966 harvest probably will be slightly under 4.5 million tons--2 million tons short of the goal. Severe drought has been blamed by Castro for this shortfall.
1. The outlook for future sugar earnings is clouded by continuing harvesting and milling problems, and by uncertain world sugar prices.
 2. General economic mismanagement continues, although some improvement has been made.
 3. Shortages in certain food and consumer goods probably will become worse in 1966, but Castro can continue to rely on large-scale Soviet assistance.

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VI. The Cuban military situation has remained stable for the last couple of years.

- A. There are over 100,000 men on active duty with the Cuban armed forces and about 85,000 in the ready reserves. The number and level of ability of the reserves will increase over the years because of the system of three year obligatory military service which was instituted in December 1963. Last week, the Cubans launched a year-long program designed to upgrade the combat readiness of the reserves.**
- B. The Cubans are increasing their proficiency in using their sophisticated air defense system, but they could not cope with a raid by many aircraft using advanced evasive and decoy techniques.**
- C. There are presently 23 surface-to-air missile sites grouped around major target areas on the island; most are located in the western third of Cuba to protect Havana and its key military installations.**
- D. Cuba also has 4 cruise missile sites and 12 KOMAR cruise missile boats; the missiles for both systems have a limited range of 40 nautical miles or less, however.**

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E. In addition, the Cubans have a full arsenal of tanks and self-propelled guns, MIG fighters, anti-aircraft guns, and other arms from Russia and other Communist countries.

VII. The Soviet presence in Cuba is limited to a few thousand military technicians and economic specialists.

- A. Since the last major military withdrawals in the summer of 1964, the level of Soviet military manpower in Cuba has remained fairly constant. Current strength is estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 men, a major reduction from the approximately 22,500 Soviets in Cuba in October 1962. The Soviet military element in Cuba is essentially a Military Aid and Advisory Group, concerned primarily with training and technical support for Cuban forces.
- B. A few shipments of Russian military goods are sent each year to Cuba; these are largely replacement parts and ammunition. Some of the replacements are new surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). The shelf life of about six years for the present missiles is expiring. Some observers confuse the new SAMs with strategic missiles.

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C. There are some 2,500 to 3,000 Soviet economic specialists in Cuba, participating in a wide variety of activities ranging from assistance to Cuba's sugar industry to petroleum exploration. It should be noted that the Cubans are frequently reported [REDACTED] to be less than happy with the patronizing attitude and lack-luster performance of some of their Russian advisors.

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D. The USSR now accounts for about 50 percent of Cuba's foreign trade. This year, the USSR will continue to supply critical consumer goods, as well as fuels and industrial equipment and raw materials. It probably will send about 700,000 tons of grain, including 35 million dollars worth of Canadian wheat bought with scarce Soviet hard-currency reserves.

1. Cuba's cumulative debt for Soviet trade credits alone now totals about \$850 million.
2. The USSR also has supplied \$400 million in economic development credits and several hundred million dollars worth of military equipment on credit.

3. We estimate it costs the Soviet Union ^{1.05 million} ~~700,000~~ dollars a day ^{this year} to keep the Castro regime afloat.

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E. Despite this heavy Russian investment, and the Cubans marked dependence on their Soviet providers, the Moscow-Havana marriage is far from satisfactory for both partners.

1. Castro's May Day speech contained several thinly-veiled anti-Russian barbs. Cuban Communist Party secretary Armando Hart's speech at the Soviet party congress last March was notably out of tune with other speeches because of its hard-line militancy; it was not well received by either the Soviets or the East European Communists.
2. Castro undoubtedly chafes under the increasing proscriptions of the "advice" from Moscow--advice which has become much more insistent since the advent of the new leadership in Moscow. The Russians are demanding a better performance on the Cuban domestic scene and greater Cuban support for Russian international policies than formerly. At times, the Russian-Cuban interests are far apart, particularly on questions involving "challenging" the US and other "imperialist" powers in Vietnam and Latin America.

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F. From time to time, articles appear in the press alleging that strategic Soviet missiles are still in Cuba. We do not dismiss such reports out of hand. We could not afford to do so--and indeed would be guilty of gross negligence--as long as we can not have on-site inspection of any possible missile sites in Cuba. I would like to examine in some detail one such article, which appeared in the Coral Gables Times of Florida on 3 March, to illustrate the methods we use to check out such items.

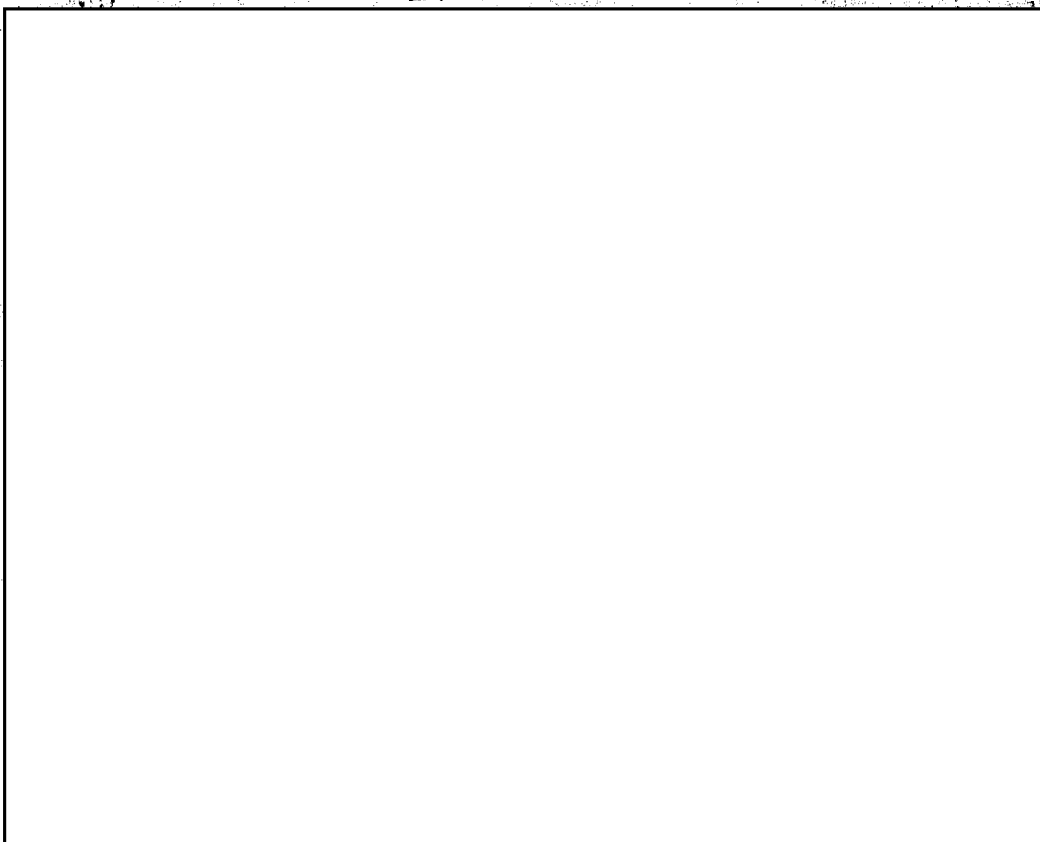
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4. The conclusion of the investigation was that all of the information on which the article was based came from missile and rocket publications, talks with unreliable Cuban refugees, and the Interim Report published by the Sub-Committee of the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 9, 1963, entitled "The Cuban Military Buildup"—a report relating to the 1962 buildup which led to the crisis that October.
5. In short, the article—and all similar articles to date—is full of outdated or misleading information. We maintain a continuing watch over the possibility of strategic missiles in Cuba, utilizing all of our resources

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6. A joint team of CIA and DIA intelligence experts meets once a month, and more often if necessary, to assess the military posture of Cuba with special attention to the possibility that strategic weapons might still be on the island.

a. The report for April specifically concluded that: "Cuba's present missile inventory is confined to defensive and tactical weapons . . . There are no strategic weapons or foreign troop units in Cuba at this time. While we recognize that some strategic weapons could be deliverately concealed or clandestinely reintroduced on the island, it is our judgement that this has not taken place."

b. Our report for the month of May contained nothing to alter the previous month's conclusion; moreover, have seen nothing suspicious so far in June pertaining to strategic missiles in Cuba.

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- G. We have also noticed numerous press articles alleging that the new Soviet-financed, multi-million dollar fishing port in Havana is a cover for Russian submarine operations. Again, information from all our sources does not bear this out. Activities at the fishing port are connected solely with Castro's ambitious plan to make Cuba into a world leader in fish exports. It is obvious, however, that Cuba could use its large fishing fleet to support subversive elements in neighboring Caribbean countries.
- H. Similarly, we have no information to bear out frequent allegations that Soviet submarines are active in Cuban waters.

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